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1962/10/25

OUTGOING MESSAGE

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Ref.:

Subject:

CUBAN POSITION ON THE CRISIS

THE CUBAN AMBASSADOR, ON INSTRUCTIONS OF HIS GOVT, CALLED ON THE MINISTER THIS AFTERNOON. HE MADE THREE POINTS AT THE OUTSET:

(A) HE WANTED US TO KNOW AND, IF POSSIBLE, THE AMERICANS THROUGH US, THAT IN THE EVENT OF INVASION (OR STARVATION), THE CUBANS WILL FIGHT TO THE DEATH, WHATEVER THE ODDS AGAINST THEM MAY BE.

(B) THE CUBAN GOVT WAS PREPARED AT ANY TIME TO NEGOTIATE ITS DIFFERENCES WITH THE USA, BUT THE USA APPARENTLY CONTINUED TO BE UNWILLING TO NEGOTIATE.

(C) THE AMBASSADOR WELCOMED THE INITIATIVE OF YESTERDAY OF THE ACTING SECRETARY CALLING FOR A TEMPORARY SUSPENSION OF THE QUARANTINE MEASURES AND OF THE DELIVERY OF ARMS TO CUBA, BUT HE SAID IT SEEMS IT HAD BEEN REJECTED BY PRESIDENT KENNEDY.

2. THE DISCUSSION THEN TURNED TO THE ARMS BUILD-UP IN CUBA.

THE MINISTER EMPHASIZED AND REITERATED THE GRAVE THREAT TO THE

LOCAL
DISTRIBUTION

STANDARD

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|---|---------------|--------|--|
| ORIGINATOR | DIVISION | PHONE | APPROVED BY |
| SIG..... NAME..... A.J. Plackman | L.A. Division | 2-7175 | SIG..... NAME..... HOWARD GREEN |

SECURITY OF THE AMERICAS, INCLUDING CANADA, OF THESE MISSILE BASES. HE INSISTED THAT THE WEAPONS WERE OF AN OFFENSIVE CHARACTER, AND, ONE WAY OR ANOTHER, they HAD TO GO. NO ONE, HE ADDED, WOULD DENY CUBA'S RIGHT TO HAVE GENUINELY DEFENSIVE WEAPONS. IN REPLY, THE AMBASSADOR FIRST OF ALL EXPRESSED DOUBTS WHETHER SUCH MISSILE BASES HAD IN FACT BEEN INSTALLED (QUESTIONING THE RELIABILITY OF PHOTOGRAPHIC EVIDENCE) BUT EVEN IF THEY DID EXIST, HE CONTENDED THAT THEY WERE THERE FOR DEFENSIVE PURPOSES. IT WAS THEN A MATTER OF THE CUSTOMARY ARGUMENT ABOUT DEFENSIVE AND OFFENSIVE WEAPONS, THE AMBASSADOR TAKING THE LINE THAT THE CIRCUMSTANCES AND ^{intentions} ~~THE PURPOSES~~ ~~FOR WHICH THEY WERE USED~~ DETERMINED WHETHER WEAPONS WERE DEFENSIVE OR OFFENSIVE. AS CUBA WAS THREATENED BY THE USA, IT WAS ENTITLED TO TAKE ALL POSSIBLE MILITARY MEASURES FOR ITS PROTECTION. THE MINISTER POINTED OUT THAT THE NEW BALLISTIC MISSILE INSTALLATIONS COULD NOT BE EFFECTIVE FOR TARGETS LESS THAN 500 MILES AWAY. THE AMBASSADOR REPLIED THAT IF CUBA WERE INVADED, THEY WOULD THEN BE ENTITLED TO FIGHT BACK TO THE BEST OF THEIR ABILITY. THE MINISTER SAID THAT BY HAVING THESE OFFENSIVE WEAPONS ON THEIR TERRITORY THEY WERE RUNNING THE RISK OF HAVING THEIR ISLAND TOTALLY DESTROYED.

3. THE AMBASSADOR CONFIRMED THAT CASTRO HAD REJECTED ANY IDEA OF INSPECTION OF CUBAN DEFENCES BY THE UNITED NATIONS. THE MINISTER EXPRESSED DISAPPOINTMENT ^{AT} ~~ON~~ THIS AND SUGGESTED THAT THIS WOULD IMPLY TO MANY COUNTRIES THAT CUBA HAD THINGS TO HIDE. THE AMBASSADOR CONTENDED THAT IT WAS A MATTER OF PRINCIPLE NOT TO ALLOW INTERNATIONAL INSPECTION, BUT HE COULD NOT OF COURSE BE SURE THAT UNDER CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES IT WOULD CONTINUE TO BE REFUSED.

4. THE MINISTER SUGGESTED THAT CUBA SHOULD COME UP WITH SOME SUGGESTION IN THE UN. THE AMBASSADOR DID NOT DISMISS ENTIRELY THE POSSIBILITY OF A PROPOSAL IN THE UN THE MAIN ELEMENTS OF WHICH MIGHT BE:

- (1) SOME SATISFACTORY ACTION BY CUBA ON THE MISSILE BASES, PERHAPS UNDER UN SUPERVISION;
- (2) A PRIOR OR SIMULTANEOUS EFFECTIVE ASSURANCE THAT THE USA WOULD NOT INVADE CUBA; AND,

(3) DIRECT NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN CUBA AND THE USA INSO FAR AS APPROPRIATE.

5. WE DO NOT KNOW IF MORE WILL BE HEARD ABOUT THESE IDEAS IN NEW YORK. APPARENTLY THE AMBASSADOR'S INSTRUCTIONS COVERED ONLY P (A), (B) AND (C) AT THE BEGINNING OF THIS TEL.

FOR WASH DC ONLY:

YOU SHOULD DISCUSS THIS TEL WITH THE STATE DEPT INDICATING THAT THE CUBAN AMBASSADOR CALLED ON THE MINISTER ESSENTIALLY TO MAKE THE POINTS LISTED IN (A), (B) AND (C) AT THE BEGINNING OF THIS TEL.